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*Shetter*

THE TWO PORTS OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

By

Books Poorman Shetter

Submitted to

Dr. McDanel

May 24, 1937

## Preface

This paper is an attempt to cast light upon two Ports that were of vital importance in the colonial period of Williamsburg, and since have degenerated to mere creeks that lie close to this vicinity. In writing this paper, I have tried to knit together, as closely as possible, information on these Ports from the establishing of the Ports in 1698 to around 1818 when the last attempt at progress concerning them was made. The information was not plentiful and did not run in uniformity. Therefore, in this paper one will find gaps and some problems incomplete.

To Swem's index, The Virginia Gazette, books listed in the bibliography, and principally through the kind aid of the Office of Restoration, Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., I owe the creation of this paper.

B. P. S.

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## I

In writing a paper upon the two Ports of a town that was destined to be the Capital of Virginia, and yet never grew to a population of over 3,000 permanent inhabitants, we must first become acquainted with the reasons for the choosing of the site, and for its failure to grow.

The first metropolis, Jamestown, was built in the most convenient place for trade and security against the Indians, but often received much damage, being twice burnt down; after which it never recovered its perfection.<sup>1</sup> In October, 1698, the state house at Jamestown fell a victim to flames, and Governor Francis Nicholson carried out the idea formerly suggested and made Middle Plantation the Seat of Government. The Assembly approved, declaring that Middle Plantation:

"hath been found by constant experience to be healthy and agreeable to the constitution of the inhabitants of this his majesty's colony and dominion having the natural advantages of a serene and temperate air, dry and champagne land, and plentifully stored with wholesome creeks that run out of James and York Rivers necessary for supplying the place with provisions and other things of necessity."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jones, Present State of Virginia. p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Tyler, Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital. p. 256

Reverend Hugh Jones states that Middle Plantation's exemption from mosquitoes, which very much troubled the dwellers at Jamestown, was another reason operating with the governor and assembly in favor of the removal<sup>3</sup>. Another reason, perhaps, lay in the fact that the College of William and Mary had been established at Middle Plantation and it was thought that by placing the Capital here that they would be of benefit to one another. Governor Nicholson laid out the city of Williamsburg (in the form of a cypher, made of W. and M.)<sup>4</sup>:

"on a Ridge at the Head Springs of two great creeks, one running into James, and the other into York River, which are each navigable for Sloops, within a Mile of the Town; at the head of which creeks are good Landings, and Lots laid out, and Dwelling Houses and Ware Houses built; so that this town is most conveniently situated, in the Middle of the Lower part of Virginia, commanding two Noble Rivers, not above four miles from either, and is much more commodious and healthful, than if built upon a river."<sup>5</sup>

However, this opinion was not held by all, for in William and Mary College Quarterly, we find the following:

"Williamsburgh is a most wretched contriv'd affair for the Capital of a country, being near three miles from the Sea, is a bad situation. It's very surprising to me,

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<sup>3</sup>~~Ibid~~ *Op. Cit. p. 25.*

<sup>4</sup>Governor Nicholson changed his mind, because of the inconvenience, though there is still a suggestion of these letters in the make-up of the eastern and western ends. Tyler, Williamsburg, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Jones, Present State of Virginia. p.30



that this should be prefer'd to James-Town, Hampton, or some other Situations I could mention."<sup>6</sup>

Reverend Jedediah Morse gives the distance of the landing places, and the disadvantage of not being able to bring up large vessels to the town, and want of enterprize in the inhabitants, as the reasons why Williamsburg never flourished.<sup>7</sup> It seemed to be called upon to prosper because of its location, and because of the advantage of being the seat of the Government, however, it seemed to always be in decline.<sup>8</sup>

## II

Middle Plantation was upon the removal of the Capital there, newly named Williamsburg, after the reigning monarch, King William, and the first survey was made by Theodorick Bland.<sup>9</sup> Two ports, each about a mile distance from the town were laid out--one called Princess Anne Port on Archer's Hope or College Creek, about five miles from James River, and the the other called Queen Mary's Port on Queen's Creek, about the same distance from York River. The body of the town

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<sup>6</sup>"Observations In Several Voyages and Travels in America in the Year 1736". William and Mary College Quarterly vol. XV, p. 223. Series I

<sup>7</sup>American Geography, 1792. p. 382.

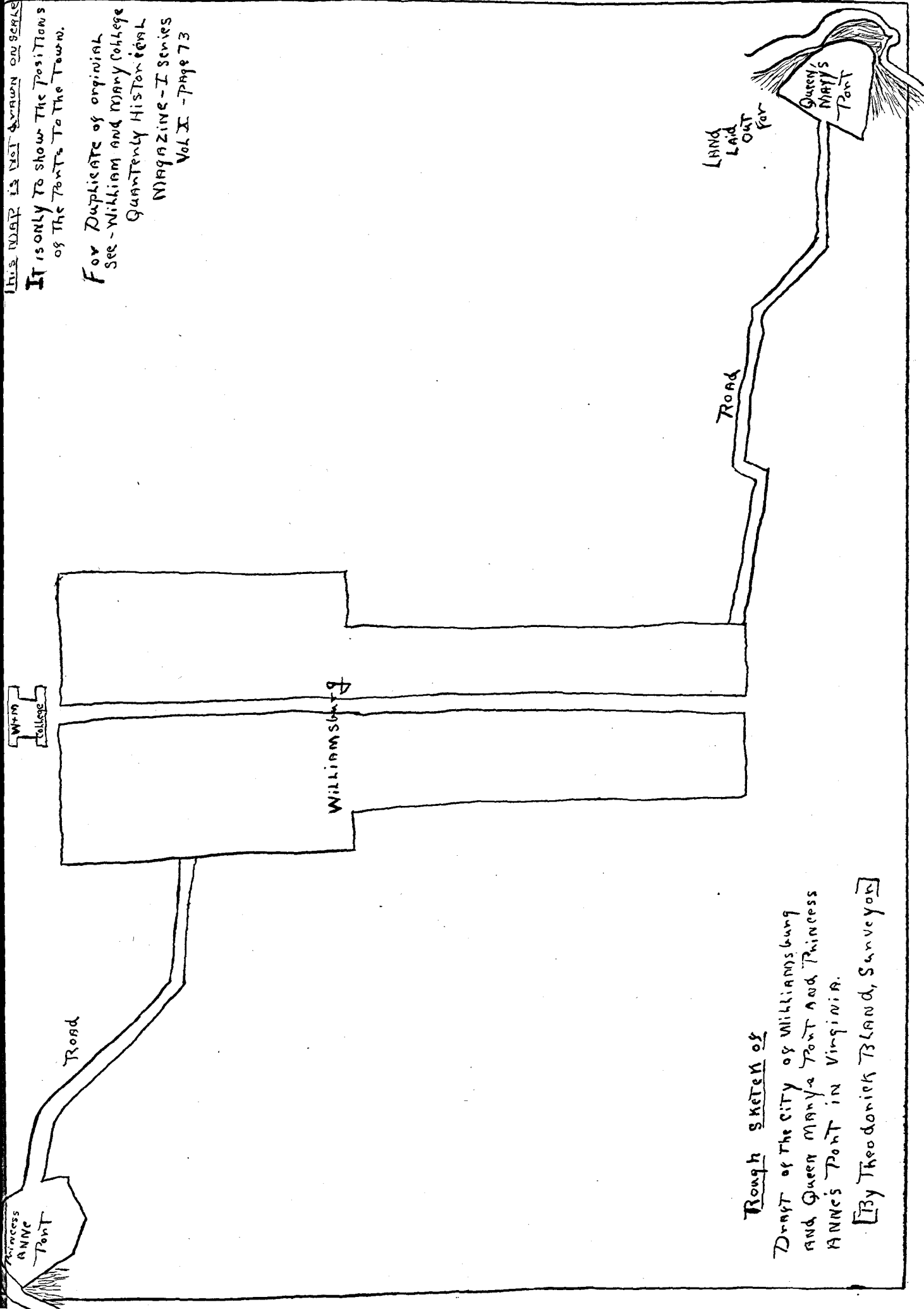
<sup>8</sup>Pictet, Tableau des Etats Unis. p. 187.

<sup>9</sup>Tyler, Williamsburg. p. 20.

THIS MAP IS NOT DRAWN ON SCALE

It is only to show the positions of the Ponds to the Town.

For Duplicate of original  
See - William and Mary College  
Quarterly Historical  
Magazine - I series  
Vol. I - page 73



Rough sketch of

Draft of the City of Williamsburg  
and Queen Mary's Pond and Princess  
Anne's Pond in Virginia.

[By Theodorick Island, Surveyor]

occupied 220 acres; Princess Anne Port, 23 acres, 37½ poles; and Queen Mary's Port, 14 acres, 71¼ poles.<sup>10</sup>

In an act for establishing ports and towns in William W. Henning's Statutes at Large, Vol. III, p. 423:

"... according to the aforesaid draught or plot, lying on the said Queen's Creek, shall be and is hereby appointed and set a-part for a port, or landing place, for the said city of Williamsburg, on the said creek; which port or landing place, in commemoration of the late Queen Mary, of blessed memory, shall forever hereafter be called and known by the name of Queen Mary's Port; and the aforementioned road or way leading thereto, shall be called Queen's road. . . according to the aforesaid draught or plot, shall be and is hereby appointed and set a-part for a road or way from the said city of Williamsburg to the Creek commonly called and known by the name of Archer's Hope Creek, running into James river; which said creek, shall forever hereafter be called and known by the name of Princess Creek. . . aforesaid draught or plot lying upon the said Princess Creek, shall be and is hereby appointed and set a-part for a port or landing place, for the said city of Williamsburg. . . in honour of her royal highness the Princess Anne of Denmark, shall be called and known by the name of Princess Anne Port forever hereafter. . ."

Queen Mary's Port lies to the northeast of Williamsburg and is also referred to as Capital Landing and Queen's Port. Princess Anne's Port lies to the southwest of Williamsburg and is also known as College Landing and by the name of

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Archer's Hope.<sup>11</sup> The objects or reasons for the foundation of these two ports were for the transportation of commerce from the larger vessels that came up the York and James Rivers, to smaller vessels, that were able to navigate in the Queen's Creek and Archer's Hope Creek, thus bringing the commerce to the said ports, within one mile of Williamsburg. These Ports were of vital importance to the progress of Williamsburg and it was principally because of them that Middle Plantation was choosen for the new Capital. In November 1698 Francis Nicholson was removed from Maryland and returned once more as Governor of Virginia.

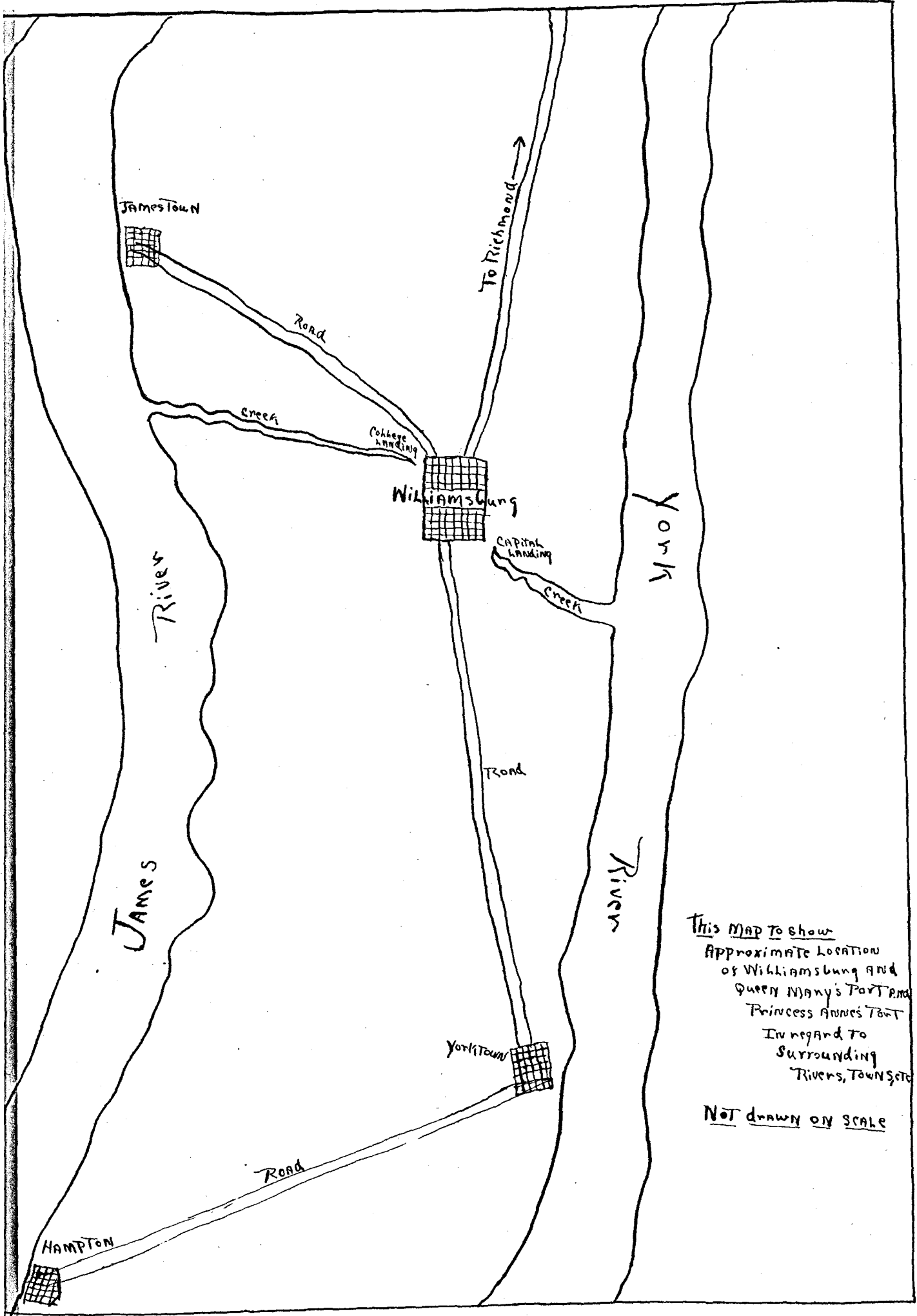
"This Gentleman, for the sake of a more dry and healthy as well as convenient Situation removed the Assembly and the Courts of Judicature from James Town to a Place called Middle Plantation because it lies at an equal Distance from James and York Rivers, between two Creeks, which afford the conveniency of Water-Carriage from each of them."<sup>12</sup>

Since progress in Colonial Virginia could not be carried on without navigable waterways. Such was their importance that all maps of this section of the tidewater from 1699, after Theodoric Bland's survey, have emphasized the development of

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<sup>11</sup>Archer's Hope was named after Captain Gabriel Archer, one of the first lawyers in Virginia. Brown, The Genesis of the United States. vol. II, p. 814

<sup>12</sup>Keith, History of the British Plantation in America. p. 170-172.



In Calendar of Virginia State Papers, we find a record of two public store houses and wharves built at Queen's Creek Landing, York County. Also in Book 10 of the records of which patents were issued during the Regal Government is found recorded on November 8, 1715, 833 square feet at Princess Anne's Port for the erection of a wharf by John Halloway. Other signs of warehouses are shown in the Virginia Gazette, of August 29, 1771:

"To be Let, to the Lowest Bidder, The Building of a Ware House at the Capital Landing, forty Feet by twenty, with one ten Foot Shed. Also the repairing of another Ware House. Those who incline to undertake the same are desired to attend at Mr. Matthew Moody's, near the landing, on Tuesday the 10th of next month, at eleven o'clock.

John Prentis  
Thomas Nelson, Junior  
William Diggs, Junior"

of June 3, 1775:

"A convenient House is just built at the College Landing, on the creek that runs into James River, for storing any kind of Goods: where are to be sold (on low terms, for cash) Salt, Tar, barrelled Pork, Hogs Lard, Bacon, good barrelled Shads and Herrings, coal for smiths and Grates, Pine Plank, Cypress Boards, Pails, Shingles &c. Flats to be hired at the same place, Mr. James Jordan lives at the Said Landing, will take in Lodgers, and keep carts to hire.

Charles Taliaferra"

Vessels loaded with goods from East India and Europe came up the James and York Rivers. Barges, sloops and other flat-bottomed boats came up Queen's Creek and Archer's Hope Creek to the landings and carried on active commerce. These two Ports were the center of trade and business for Colonial Williamsburg. Advertisements of goods to buy and sell were regularly found in the Virginia Gazette. Such advertisements as the following were a common occurrence:

September 26, 1745

"Just imported. . . a quantity of choise  
Green and Bohea Tea, with Druggs, Oils. . ."

May 31, 1776

"I will give 7d. halfpenny a pound for  
Bacon, and 4l per barrel for Pork,  
delivered in Williamsburg or at the College  
or Capital Landing's.

John Hawkins"

October 24, 1777

"Wanted for the Hospitals of this state,  
five or six hhds. of good vinegar, to be  
delivered at either the Capital or College  
Landings, for which a good price will be  
given by

Benjamin Bucktrout"

December 4, 1779

"The subscriber is in want of a quantity  
of good Barley for his brewhouse at the  
College Landing, for which he will give a  
good price, or exchange for strong beer.

Charles Taliaferro"

December 11, 1779

"Just imported from Hispaniala, and to be sold at the College Landing, a quantity of Muscanago sugar, and a few casks of French rum, either by the hogshead or barrel; the sale to continue til the end of next week. Also may be had at Mr. Scouvemout's in this city, a few cards of neat stone sleeve-buttons."

February 12, 1780

"The subscriber desirous of carrying on his business extensively, would wish to agree with any person or persons on York or James Rivers, and not inconvenient to the Capital or College Landings, for a quantity of oak bark, for which he will give Cash, or leather at the old price. He has for sale a large quantity of tanned and leather of all sorts, among which is excellant boot legs, with bend leather shoes.

William Plume"

April 21, 1774

"Matthew Moody, Jun living at the lowest house at the Capital Landing, begs leave to acquaint the Publick that he keeps, at all times, fine Queen's Creek Oysters, fresh from the Rocks, which will be dressed . . . Tea and Coffee to be had likewise, if required; and a good Bowl of Punch."

December 23, 1775

Thomas Sneed in a letter to the editor, John Pinkney relates:

"Ibrought some rum from the Eastern Shore to this city, for which I had a certificate, as directed by our act of Assembly, which I thought sufficient; I called at York on



my way. . .nobody there wanted rum; so  
I kept on my course to the Capital-landing."

Tyler describes the taverns of Henry Bocock and Matthew Moody, as; "taverns of considerable pretensions".<sup>14</sup> Also we find record of an order granting John Davis to keep an ordinary at his dwelling house at Queen Mary's Port for one year.<sup>15</sup> In a letter found in Philip Alexander Bruce's Economic History of Virginia In the Seventennth Century, is related to importation of malt to go to Mr. C. Harris in Queen's Creek.<sup>16</sup>

From the preceding we can readily understand the importance and activity that surrounded these Ports. However, these landings are shown to have been unsatisfactory at first by an appeal from the Governor on November 6, 1713, to the House of Burgesses:

" . . .and I wish you joyned in Opinion with me that to give some assistance to this Infant Town, Towards building a Market House, betterings the Landings, securing a few publick Springs. . ."<sup>17</sup>

In November 28, 1720, a petition was presented by the citizens of Williamsburg: " . . .complaining of the Irregularities of their principle Street. . .and the Inconveniency of the Publick Landings. . ."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital. p. 256.

<sup>15</sup>Orders and Bonds of York County. Book 16, p. 206.

<sup>16</sup>vol. II, p. 213.

<sup>17</sup>Journal of House of Burgess, 1712-1726. p. 47-48.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

There was an appropriation made for the repaving of the main street, but the other appeals were not granted. It must be remembered that at an early date the land surrounding these creeks were considered to be dangerous from its liability to Indian incursions, and an exemption from the poll tax was allowed to those who located themselves between the heads of Queen's Creek and Archer's Hope Creek.<sup>19</sup>

By an act for the regulation and settlement of Ferries; and for the dispatch of public expresses: "That Ferries be constantly kept at the places hereafter named; and that the rates for passing the said ferries be as followeth. . ."<sup>20</sup> We find that a ferry listed at Williamsburg, from Princess Anne Port to Hog-Island, rates for a man two shillings, for a man and horse four shillings.<sup>21</sup> Also upon the York River a ferry from Queen Mary's Port to Claybank Creek, in Gloucester County, rate for a man at two shillings, and six pence.<sup>22</sup> On May 16, 1715, license was given to Giles Moody to establish a ferry from Queen Mary's Port to Claybank in Gloucester.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia. p. 563. Vol.?

<sup>20</sup>Hening, Statutes At Large. vol. III, p. 469-470.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 471.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 472.

<sup>23</sup>Orders and Wills of York County. p. 417. Vol.?

## III

In 1747, when the first Capital burned, the seat of government was urged to be moved to a more central location. However, this measure was not passed and a new Capital was built, plans were made to improve the streets, and to build a canal through the city, from Archer's Hope Creek to Queen's Creek,<sup>24</sup> thereby placing the Capital directly upon waterways that connected to the York and James Rivers. An account of the proposed canal is given in the Virginia Gazette of January 16, 1772:

"At a Court of Common Hall yesterday, to take under consideration the Expediency of opening a Communication between James and York Rivers, by a canal to be dug from Archer's Hope Creek, which runs into James River, to Queen's Creek, running into the York River, it was unanimous Opinion that such a measure would be attended with great Benefit to the Trade of the said Rivers, as well as to the Inhabitants of this city: upon which a Subscription was immediately set on Foot for carrying this desirable Scheme into Execution, which already amounts to upward of two Thousand Pounds, his Excellency the Governour giving five Hundred Pounds, the Honourable Peyton Randolph, Esquire, two Hundred Pounds, and a number of other Gentlemen a Hundred Pounds each. And there will be another Hall next Saturday, at which all inhabitants are desired to attend, when it is not doubted the Subscription will be considerably increased. . ."

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<sup>24</sup>Geddy, The City Plan of Colonial Williamsburg.

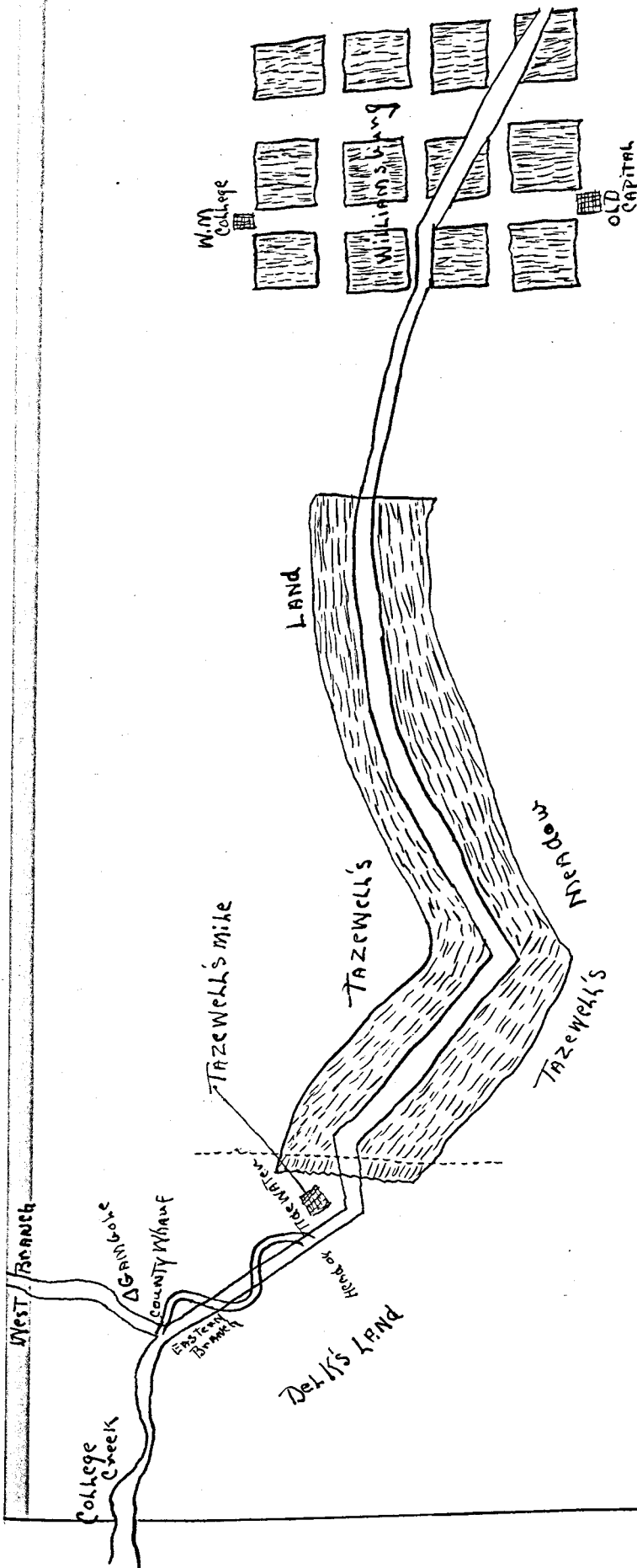
I was not able to obtain a record of the meeting due to be January 23, 1772. However, this plan never succeeded on account of the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. In 1779, the Capital was removed from Williamsburg thereby making the canal "no longer an object of importance".<sup>25</sup>

In the study of various maps of this period (principally maps drawn and used for war purposes), the vital importance of Queen's Creek and Archer's Hope Creek are again shown, by their being on almost all maps of this region. One map,<sup>26</sup> drawn in December of 1818, shows that College Creek was still of importance and used considerably even to this late date. This map was created by T. M. Ladd and shows that in 1818 the proposed canal from College Creek to Williamsburg was again considered, perhaps to a greater extent than before. It reveals a county wharf in existence in 1818, and a warehouse. The route of the proposed canal ran through Tazewell's meadow and through the town, ending at the southwest corner of Williamsburg. Presumably to join a canal from Capital Landing.

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<sup>25</sup> Winterbotham, An Historical Geographical, Commercial and Philosophical View of the American United States. p. 100.

<sup>26</sup> Photostat found in Research Department Collection of Williamsburg. Original may be found in Virginia State Library.



Note-This MAP NOT COPIED IN PROPORTION  
NO SCALE - MERELY TO SHOW WAY OF CANAL  
ON rough idea.

# A PLAN OF THAT PART OF THE VIRGINIA CANAL

FROM College Creek TO WILLIAMSBURG,  
DISTANCE, ONE MILE, ONE HUNDRED AND  
TWENTY TWO POLES, AND TWENTY SEVEN  
LINKS, BY THO<sup>S</sup> M. LADD

FOR

THE PRESIDENT + DIRECTORS, OF SAID CANAL

The land across Queen's Creek from Williamsburg was settled densely and the building of a bridge over the creek seemed of great importance. In 1716 York County Court gave Samuel Timson permission to place the first bridge across the creek.<sup>27</sup> A bridge was proposed to be built in 1773, as shown by the Virginia Gazette of August 12, 1773:

"To be Let to the lowest Bidder, The Building of a Bridge over Queen's Creek, near Capital Landing. Those Persons who choose to undertake the Work, are desired to meet the Subscribers, on Thursday the 2d. Day of September next, at the House of Mr. Matthew Moody, Senior, near the said Landing.

John Blair  
William Graves  
John Dixon"

In 1774 the bridge was built of stone, and the laying of the foundation stone caused a gallant occasion of much ceremony in Williamsburg,<sup>28</sup> as the Virginia Gazette of October 6, 1774, shows:

"Yesterday the Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of this city went in Procession, in the proper Insignia of their Order, to the Capital Landing, and laid the Foundation Stone of the new Stone Bridge now building over Queen's Creek under which was a Plate with the following Inscription. . .After the proper and usual Libation, they repaired to the House of Mr. Matthew Moody, Junior (a Brother) and spent the afternoon in Mirth and good humour."

---

<sup>27</sup>Tyler, Williamsburg. p. 256.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

The bridge seems to have closed the creek from traffic and proved unsatisfactory to those wishing to proceed beyond it. For in the Virginia Gazette of March 28, 1777, we find:

"Pursuant to an Order of York County Court, appointing us to agree with some person to make the Creek Navigable through the Stone Bridge lately erected at the Capital Landing, and to stop up the said Creek where the old Bridge now stands, we give this public Notice, that we Shall Proceed to let the said work to the lowest Bidder, on Tuesday the 15th of next Month, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, at the Capital Landing.

Dudley Digges  
John Blair  
David Jameson  
William Graves  
John Tazewell"

#### IV

The James and York Rivers were active rivers of trade and the volume of shipping upon them ~~were~~ large. However, it is not definite exactly how much of this shipping found its way to Queen Mary's Landing and Princess Anne's Landing. They, doubtless, received their share of shipping. The shipping records available at this time merely give the name and kind of ship, its cargo and destination. These are recorded in the Virginia Gazette shipping news as entering in the Upper District of James River, or entering inwards on the York River. The following shipping items are given

to show the character and amount of shipping on the James and York Rivers. There is no definite proof as to the amount of the shipping that may or may not have landed at Capital or College Landing, but it is thought that Williamsburg received its share of this trade.

November 9, 1736

Entered at the Port of York River. Sloop John and Mary, of Virginia Richard Tillidge, from Barbadoes.

November 19, 1736

Enter<sup>d</sup> in the Upper District of James River, since our last. Sloop Increase, of Bermuda William Darrell, Master, from Barbadoes, and Anguilla.

November 19-26, 1736

Enter<sup>d</sup> in the Upper District of the James River, since our last. Brigantine Henry and Benjamin, of Virginia Thomas Friend, Master, from Jamaica.

December 3-10, 1736

Entered in the Upper District of James River, since our last. Sloop Experience, Francis Cooper, Master of Bermude and from Curacoa.

May 25, 1745

Entered in York River. Ship Chichester, of Belfast in Ireland, Robert Lush from Belfast.

August 17, 1752

Entered Upward in York River. Sloop Providence, Ralph Finch, from Providence with 3 tons of Lignumvitae, 400 feet of Maderia Plank, 25,000 Limes, 7 dozen of Pine Apples, and 20 Green Turtles.



August 22, 1752

Cleared Outwards in York River. Susanna, of Glasgow, William Lang, for Glasgow with 156 Hhds. of Tobacco, 1 Hhd. of Rum, 6500 Stoves, 3 Mahogany Logs and 130 feet Made Oars.

September 1, 1752

Cleared Outwards in York River. Lyde, Samuel Venables, for Liverpool, with 269 Hhds. of Tobacco, 6000 Stoves, 48 Pairs of Aft Oars, and 300 feet of Walnut Plank.

August 19, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Scooner, Frances, Christopher Fenney, from Barbadoes.

August 19, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Brig. Patty, Samuel Whitehurst, from Madeira.

August 19, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Schooner, Spokes, Saunders Calvert, from Barbadoes.

August 19, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Sloop Pethom, James Taylor, from London.

August 22, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Sloop, Glasgow, Matthew Stroud, from Barbadoes.

August 27, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Schooner, William, William Chisholm, from Providence.

August 27, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River. Sloop, Two Brothers, John Davis, from Antiqua.

August 28, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Brigt. John A. Richard, Thosmas Calvert, from Barbadoes.

August 28, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Delphin, Edward Blake, from Spanish Town.

August 31, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Snow Dragon, Thomas German, from Antiqua.

August 31, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Good Intent, Gerard Syers, from Spanish Town.

August 31, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Schooner, Mulberry, Charles Durgie, from Philadelphia.

August 31, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Charming Molly, Thomas Brickell, from New York.

September 2, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Ship, Virginia Parker, Thomas Aiselly, from Bristol.

Cleared Outwards, upper District of James River

September 21, 1752

Anne Gally, of Bristol-Tobacco, Tar, Turpentine, Pitch,  
Pig-Iron, Elephants Teeth, 2 Tons of Redwood.

Entered Inwards, in York River.

October 9, 1752

Snow Levant, of Bristol, James M'Murdo, from Gallaber in  
Africa, with 184 Negro Slaves and 700, Weight of Ivory.

September 15, 1752

Cleared Outward in York River.  
Barwell, Thomas Canzfar, for Whitehaven with 258 Hhds.  
of Tobacco, 5000 feet of Plant, 12000 Stoves, 6 Bbls of  
Tar and 10 pair of Oars.

October 3, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Raleigh, John Bayne, from Barbadoes, with 18 Hhds.  
rum and 20 Bbls. of Sugar.

October 5, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Snow George, Charles Cooke, from Africa, with 54 Negroes,  
and some Elephant's Teeth.

October 6, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Snow Bimming, Robert Steel, from Glasgow, with Sundry  
European Goods.

October 10, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Buckskin, Lorain Lyell, from New York, with 17  
Tons of Biscuit, Fish and Fruit, 8 Casks of Oil, 8 Casks  
of Rum, 28 cases of Molasses, and 25 Casks of Sugar.

October 11, 1752

Entered Inwards, in the Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Charming Sally, Michael Henderson, from New York,  
with 3 crates of Earthen Ware, and 1 Barrel of Biscuit.

September 27, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Snow Phoenix, Samuel Kelby, from Upper District, bound  
for London with 22 Hhds. of Tobacco and 2 boxes of Gingsang.

September 28, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Speewell, Cleland Taggart, for Jamaica, with  
15,000 Stoves, 6000 Shingles, 79 Scanteing, 172 Boards,  
400 Bushels of Corn, and some live Stock.

September 29, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Schooner, Spikes, Saunders Calvert, for Barbadoes, with  
1000 Bushels of Corn, 9 Barrels of Flour, 4 Barrels of  
Bread, 30 Barrels of Pork, 57,000 Shingles.

October 1, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Past Boys, Terrence Waddick, for St. Kittl, with  
30 Barrels of Pork, 646 Bushels of Corn, and 12,000  
Shingles.

October 3, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Schooner, Frances, Christopher Faney, for Barbadoes, with  
1500 Bushels of Corn, 5000 Shingles and 2000 Stoves.

October 4, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Ship, Bobby, Goodrick Boush, for London from Upper District  
with 46 Hhds. of Tobacco, 3 Barrels and 2 boxes of Gingsang.

October 6, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Sloop, Success, John Moses, for St. Kitts, from South  
Potomack, 20 Barrels of Pitch, and 20 Barrels of Tar.

October 10, 1752

Cleared Outwards, in Lower District of James River.  
Schooner, William, William Chisholm, for Providence, with  
300 Bushels of Corn, 9,000 Shingles, and some Stock.

October 30, 1752

Cleared Outwards in York River.

Elizabeth, Edward Parden, for London, with 528 Hhds. of Tobacco, 10,000 Stoves, a Parcel of Sassafras Root, 24 Pair of Ash Oars, 58 Elephant Teeth, and 4 Chests of Gingsang.

From these<sup>29</sup> we can see that the York and James Rivers were active throughout the 18th Century, and we can assume that Capital and College Landings were likewise busy. The volume of shipping in the colonial days in regard to imports and exports varied with the prices and demand for goods.

The Williamsburg merchants received the majority of their goods through packets that were regularly operated upon the York and James. The Virginia Gazette of September 22, 1768, gives the following:

"The Subscriber begs leave to inform the Public that, in October next, he intends to establish a Packet Boat to go from Portsmouth and Norfolk to Williamsburg, every Wednesday, and return on Saturday. She is a prime Sailor, and will be furnished with the best accomodations for passengers. Attendance will be given on Tuesday's at Stephen Tankard's Wharf, for taking in goods; and everything will be made as agreeable as possible to those Gentlemen who will favour him with their Custom. . .

John Goodrick"

Although this advertisement does not designate the Landing to which the packet boat docked in Williamsburg, undoubtedly, it must have been College Landing or, possibly, Capital Landing.

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<sup>29</sup>The above list of shipping is not complete, chosen only to give an idea of the shipping on these two rivers.

## V

A Landing or Port in colonial days did not merely mean only wharfs or docks or any particular wharf or dock, it had to do with the surrounding territory. Capital and College Landings were surrounded by a number of plantations, houses, warehouses, taverns and such. Tyler says of Capital Landing or Queens Mary's Port: "before the revolution that there was quite a village here".<sup>30</sup> Capital Landing was established at an earlier date and was more important. It was also more densely settled than College Landing.

The roads leading to Capital and College Landings were filled with stores, dwelling houses, and plays an important part in the history of Capital and College Landings. To show the extent of activity and value of the outlying plantations, farmhouses, etc., that surrounded these landings, we find in the Virginia Gazette<sup>31</sup>:

## College Landing

March 17, 1774

"To be sold on very reasonable Terms. . .  
The valuable and well known Plantation. . .  
and leading to College Landing, which is  
one of the best Tracts of Land for a Farm  
in Virginia. . ."

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<sup>30</sup>Williamsburg The Old Colonial Capital. p. 256.

<sup>31</sup>The advertisements I have listed are, of course, not a complete list, they were picked at random, to illustrate the majority.

July 10, 1778

"Run away from subscriber, living at the mouth of Queen's Creek, York River. . . a dark mulatto man salve. . .and I have good reason to believe that he was carried from College Landing to Portsmouth by a craft conducted by negroes. . ."

February 7, 1784

"To be sold or rented, all the wharfs, stores, and Dwelling houses at the College Landing in Williamsburg. . .A description is thought unnecessary, as the value of this landing is generally known. . ."

October 6, 1787

". . .about 300 acres of Land adjoining the Town, and lying on each side of the road to the College Landing. . ."

#### Capital Landing

April 29, 1737

"To be Lett or sold, at the Capital Landing a House, 40 Feet long, and 20 Feet wide, having a Porch, and Brick Chimneys with Fire-Places above and below a Brick cellar. . ."

January 4, 1739

"Ran away from the Subscriber, living at Capital Landing. . .a Servant Man."

April 25, 1751

"Eight Lots, at the Capital Landing in Williamsburg, with two Dwelling-houses. . ."

June 13, 1751

"A Sober Person, of Good Morals, Capable of teaching children to read English well. . . by applying to the Subscriber, at the Capital Landing. . ."

February 18, 1768

"Also will be sold on very reasonable terms, three good lots and houses. . . on the road leading from Capital to Capital Landing; on which are all convenient improvements. . ."

July 21, 1775

"On Tuesday next will be sold, at the Capital Landing,. . .all the estate of Matthew Moody. . ."

In the Phoenix Plough-Boy:

November 12, 1828

"Notice is hereby given that I shall petition the Legislature of Virginia, at the ensuing session, for permission to erect a Tide Mill at the Capital Landing on Queen's Creek in York County."

In the Williamsburg Gazette and James City County Advertizer, of April 7, 1886, we find an advertisement of a mill for sale, near College Creek:

"College Mill, 50 acres. . . . \$7,000  
or ditto and 415 acres . . . . 9,500"

As before mentioned there were also taverns<sup>32</sup> and such along these two roads and at the landings.

## VI

In an act of 1705 continuing the act directing the building the Capitol and the city of Williamsburg,<sup>33</sup> there was

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<sup>32</sup>See p. 12.

<sup>33</sup>Hening, Statutes at Large. vol. III, p. 419.



enacted on October 23, 1705, an act that upon the sale of public land in and around Williamsburg, that within twenty-four months if one good dwelling house was not erected according to certain qualifications,<sup>34</sup> that the grant or conveyance, be void and the lands again placed upon sale. In regard to Queen Mary's Port and Princess Anne's Port, the lots laid out could not exceed sixty square feet,<sup>35</sup> also that at each port a sufficient quantity of land should be left in common.<sup>35</sup>

Williamsburg lay in two counties, half in York County, the other in James City County. The records of James City County of the lots surrounding Princess Anne's Port were destroyed by fire or lost.<sup>36</sup>

On January 20, 1774, Matthew Davenport, town clerk, ran the following advertisement in the Virginia Gazette:

"The person who has got a Plan of the Lots at the College Landing, or a Plan of Johnson's Lots, in the City of Williamsburg is desired to send them to. . ."

However, either the plans were not in possession of anyone, or else Matthew Davenport's advertisement was not answered, for in 1774 the court of Directions ordered that the plan of

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<sup>34</sup>"Twenty foot in width and thirty foot in length, if on the main street, of ten foot pitch and withen six feet of the street." Ibid. p. 425.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. p. 426-427.

<sup>36</sup>Virginia Gazette ~~Gazette~~, May 12, 1774, refers to the plans as "being last".

the lots, and common at Princess Anne's Port be re-surveyed and laid off anew.<sup>37</sup> On May 12, 1774, the town clerk, in an advertisement in the Virginia Gazette asked that all persons, claiming lots around Princess Anne's Port, to "give all the Light they can with Respect to their Location".

However, the plans of the lots of the most important part, Queen Mary's Port, being in York County, are preserved. We have records in the Deeds and Bonds of York County<sup>38</sup>, of some of the earliest owners of these lots surrounding Capital Landing. All of these lots were, of course, under the act of 1705, in regards to building.<sup>38</sup>

On December 12, 1718, the trustees of the city of Williamsburg sold to John Davis, for 30 shillings, two lots of ground in Queen Mary's Port denoted in the plot<sup>39</sup> of the Port for the figures 1 and 2.<sup>40</sup> On April 27, 1762, Matthew Moody sold to Wilson Miles Cary for five pounds lots numbered 3 and 10. <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Virginia Gazette, May 12, 1774.

<sup>38</sup>See p. 29, f.n. 35.

<sup>39</sup>This plot or plan of the lots laid off appears to run back from the Landing, the lowest numbered lots appearing closer to the landing, there are some irregularities. From a study of the Plan of Williamsburg from the Benj<sup>n</sup> Bucktrout, August 1800.

<sup>40</sup>Deeds and Bonds of York County. Book III, p. 265-66.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid. Book VI, p. 424

On September 16, 1721, Trustees of city of Williamsburg sold to Jonathan Drewit, the lots number 4, 8, 9, 12 for three pounds. On November 13, 1717, Trustees of city of Williamsburg sold to Jonathan Drewit, for three pounds, lots denoted 5, 6, 30, 31.<sup>42</sup> On March 18, 1763, Benjamin Walker must have acquired lots 5 and 6 for we have a record of his selling lots 5 and 6 to William Pearson for 25 pounds. On October 7, 1714, Feoffees sold to Sharp Francis denoted lot 7.<sup>43</sup> On September 17, 1726, Francis Sharp sold lot 7 to Samuel Cobbs for eight pounds.<sup>44</sup> On December 17, 1728, lot 7 again changed hands for eight pounds from Samuel Cobbs to Martha Drewit.<sup>45</sup>

On March 15, 1722, the Trustees of city of Williamsburg sold to John Davis for 30 shillings, lots denoted 11 and 12.<sup>46</sup> Hereby lot 12 must have been taken back from Jonathan Drewit, who had purchased it in 1721. On July 19, 1720, Trustees of city of Williamsburg sold to Lewis Holland nine lots for 6 pounds, 15 shillings denoted in the plot of Queen's Port as lots 13, 14, 36, 37, 38, 39, 64, 65, 68.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid. Book III, p. 206-207.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid. Book III, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 464.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 512.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 408.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 355.

On September 20, 1736, William Prentis, executor of Lewis Holland, sold to John Harmer and Walter King, lots 13, 14, 63, 65, and 68, for 18 pounds.<sup>48</sup>

On September 15, 1741, Richard Booker sold to Benjamin Bryan, for 5 shillings, six lots lying at Queen Mary's Port, designed by the figures 17, 18, 19, 20, 34, 35.<sup>49</sup> On May 18, 1717, Trustees of city of Williamsburg to Giles Moody, for 3 pounds, lots 22, 23, 24, and 25 at Queen Mary's Port.<sup>50</sup>

On June 2, 1719, Trustees of city of Williamsburg to George Gilbert for 3 pounds four lots of ground in Queen Mary's Port, designed in plot of port, by figures 26, 27, 28, and 29.<sup>51</sup> On August 13, 1720, George Gilbert sold these four lots to Graves Packe, together with houses, and outhouses, for consideration 39 pounds.<sup>52</sup> These four lots changed hands to John Kaidyee, apparently, for on August 27, 1745, we find record<sup>53</sup> of Charles Rudder, selling the lots to Thomas Hornsley for 10 pounds, and reference in the same place, that John Kaidyee had willed these lots to Charles Rudder. Again on November 1, 1745

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid. Book IV, p. 430.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. Book V, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. Book III, p. 214-215.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 293.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 357.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid. Book V, p. 144.

lots 26, 27, 28, and 29 are recorded <sup>as</sup> ~~to~~ being sold by Charles Rudder to William Pridge for 60 pounds,<sup>54</sup> and also a reference in some place that lots 26, 27, 28, 29 were bequeathed to Edward Randolph by Graves Packe. Hereby it seems that lots 26, 27, 28, 29 were bought by George Gilbert in 1719, sold to Graves Packe in 1720, who bequeathed them to Edward Randolph, who on January 14, 1740, sold them for 25 pounds to John Kaidyee,<sup>55</sup> who willed them to Charles Rudder,<sup>56</sup> who according to Book V of Deeds and Bonds of York County, sold them to Thomas Hornsby on August 27, 1745, and to William Pride on November 1, 1745.

On October 15, 1715, Trustees of city of Williamsburg to John Halloway, for 10 shillings, lot denoted 32 in plan or plot of Queen Mary's Port.<sup>57</sup> On April 2, 1723, Trustees of city of Williamsburg to Jonathan Drewett, for 30 shillings, lots in Queen's Port designed by figures 32 and 33.<sup>58</sup> Hereby lot 32, that was granted to John Halloway in 1715, must have returned to the city by his lack of payment or of fulfilling building act of 1705.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid. Book V, p. 151.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. Book IV, p. 624.

<sup>56</sup>Wills and Inventories of York County, Book XXI, p. 161 and p. 366.

<sup>57</sup>Bonds and Deeds of York County. Book III, p. 88.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 409.

<sup>59</sup>See p. 28.

On September 6, 1736, Executors of Lewis Holland, sold to John Kaidyee, for seven pounds, lots lying at Queen's Port, denoted 36, 37, 38, and 39.<sup>60</sup> On January 26, 1722, Trustees of city of Williamsburg to Thomas Jones, for 3 pounds, 15 shillings, lots in the plot of Queen Mary's Port denoted by figures as 58, 59, 60, 61, and 62.<sup>61</sup>

The lots that remain in this paper as unnamed are due to certain deeds and Bpnds and wills that do not carry the number of the lot, but a description and location of the lot. These being so full and indefinite as to the specific location, the author thought it best not to include them.<sup>62</sup>

For more detailed and more condensed study of these lots, see the list on the following page.

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<sup>60</sup>Deeds and Bonds of York County. Book IV, p. 434.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. vol. III, p. 400.

<sup>62</sup>For location of the numbered lots, see, Plan of Williamsburg from the Benj<sup>n</sup> Bucktrout, August 1800.

Early Owners of Lots at Capital Landing  
In Accordance with Plan or Plot Laid Out

LOT	SELLER	BUYER	DATE
1	Williamsburg	John Davis	1718
2	Williamsburg	John Davis	1718
3	Matthew Moody	M. W. Cary	1762
4	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1721
5	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1717
	Benjamin Walker	William Pearson	1763
6	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1717
	Benjamin Walker	William Pearson	1763
7	Williamsburg	Francis Sharp	1714
	Francis Sharp	Samuel Cobbs	1726
	Samuel Cobbs	Martha Drewit	1728
8	Same as lot 4		
9	Same as lot 4		
10	Matthew Moody	M. W. Cary	1762
11	Williamsburg	John Davis	1722
12	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1721
	Williamsburg	John Davis	1722
13	Williamsburg	Lewis Holland	1720
	Executor of	John Horner	
	Lewis Holland	Walter King	1736
14	Same as lot 13		
17	Richard Booker	Benjamin Bryan	1741
18	"	"	"
19	"	"	"
20	"	"	"
22	Williamsburg	Giles Moody	1717
23	"	"	"
24	"	"	"
25	"	"	"
26	Williamsburg	George Gilbert	1719
	George Gilbert	Graves Packe	1720
	Graves Packe	Edward Randolph	
		(bequeathed to)	
	Edward Randolph	John Kaidyee	1740
	John Kaidyee	Charles Rudder	
		(willed to)	
	Charles Rudder	Thomas Hornsby	Aug., 1745
	? Charles Rudder	William Eride	Nov., 1745
27	Same as lot 26		
28	Same as lot 26		
29	Same as lot 26		

LOT	SELLER	BUYER	DATE
30	Same as lot 5		
31	Same as lot 5		
32	Williamsburg	John Holloway	1715
	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1723
33	Williamsburg	Jonathan Drewit	1723
34	Richard Booker	Benjamin Bryan	1741
35	Richard Booker	Benjamin Bryan	1741
36	Williamsburg	Lewis Holland	1720
	Executors of		
	Lewis Holland	John Kaidyee	1736
37	Same as lot 36		
38	Same as lot 36		
39	Same as lot 36		
58	Williamsburg	Thomas Jones	1722
59	"	"	"
60	"	"	"
61	"	"	"
62	"	"	"
64	Same as lot 13		
65	Same as lot 13		
68	Same as lot 13		



## VII

From the foregoing pages we are able to understand the activity and importance that once surrounded these Ports. We can understand the important part they played in the choosing of Williamsburg for the Capital and in the maintaining of the site throughout eighty-one years. Also we are able to realize the necessity, need, impossibility of a town trying to survive in the colonial days without waterways, for waterways in the colonial days governed the very life of every town. Waterways were the principle means of travel and transportation, as important then as our improved highways are today.

We have reviewed the foundation of the Ports, the activity surrounding them, the proposed canals, the bridge, the ferries, ships that may have traded there, the earlier owners of land--all of this was the beginning of a new Capital--and yet, it never prospered to a population of over three thousand permanent inhabitants.

The Capital was placed at Middle Plantation, or Williamsburg, principally since there it was upon high land, and yet had navigable waterways. One of the principle reasons for Williamsburg's failure to grow is contributed to the inconvenience and incapability of the landing places. From this

we are able to see the great part that these Ports played in the history of our country. Queen Mary's Port and Princess Anne's Port were the, or a, cause of Williamsburg's being made the Capital; they were also the, or a, cause of the downfall of Williamsburg. The reason or cause, the downfall or failure--the result of two Ports or Landings, that today lie unknown, unused, unmarked, and unrealized as to the important part they played in the colonial period of our nation.

THE END

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